



# WEEKLY UPDATE

22 September 2020

Happy Autumnal Equinox, Fort Sill Leaders! Here's hoping today ushers in a fall season filled with abundance and gratitude. This is your weekly ACS Update, all the Soldier and Family Readiness news you can use to support the personnel in your organization. Contact us at 580-442-4916 if we can be of assistance. If we can't assist you immediately, we'll make an appointment for you to discuss the issue with one of our providers. Like our logo says, we are here to support you with real life solutions for successful Army living!

## Community Information Services

New to Lawton Fort Sill and wondering where to turn next? Let an ACS Specialist at Fort Sill's Army Community Service help you. We'll help you complete an Intake, Assessment, and Prioritized Service Plan that can be resourced right here in our local community. The Specialist will then help you access all the resources necessary to complete your Prioritized Service Plan, whether that's at ACS, on-post, in the surrounding community or through a National Resource such as Military One Source. And they'll regularly check-in with you until all the goals on your Prioritized Service Plan are achieved. So whether you are trying to find your way around Lawton Fort Sill, want to borrow a few things from the Lending Closet, need help finding Spouse Employment, want to join in on one of the New Parent Support virtual playgroups, or need a second set of eyes on your Family's Spend Plan, contact an ACS Specialist at 580-442-4916. We are here with Real Live Solutions for Successful Army Living!

September is Suicide Prevention Month and at Fort Sill we believe in People First! That's why it's vital everyone is aware of the resources that are available to assist during times of crisis, like the Military Crisis Line at (800) 273-8255. The Military Crisis Line, text-messaging service, and online chat provide free VA support for all Service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and all Veterans, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. Learn more at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line>.



Blue Star Families launched their 2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey last week! Why is this so important to military families like yours? Because now, more than ever, leadership is making community-specific decisions based on your input. By sharing your challenges and what matters most to you, you provide real data to military and civilian decision makers. Real data = real solutions to programs and policies that improve your quality of life. So, what do you say? Will you raise your hand to keep the momentum going and sustain change? If so, share what's currently affecting your military family by taking the 2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey today at <https://bluestarfam.org>. It should only take about 30 minutes of your time to complete. And once you do, you can enter to receive one of five \$100 gift cards. It's BSF's way of saying thank you for your commitment to being a voice for your community.



September is also National Preparedness Month. Limit the impacts that disasters have on you and your family. Know the risk of disasters in your area and check your insurance coverage. Learn how to make your home stronger in the face of storms and other common hazards and act fast if you receive a local warning or alert. Learn everything you need to be prepared in any emergency from our friends at the Department of Homeland Security through their Ready.Gov website at <https://www.ready.gov/>





Did you know that September is Baby Safety Month. Download a baby safety checklist from our friends at Safe Kids Worldwide here

[https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/baby\\_safety\\_checklist.pdf](https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/baby_safety_checklist.pdf)



## Employment Readiness

Use the MSEP Job Search on the MySECO portal to find more job opportunities with MSEP employers. 143,000 military spouse have been hired by MSEP since June 2011 and you could be next. The portal currently lists 283,811 Active Jobs for Military Spouses with MSEP Partner Companies, many of them remote. Learn more at

<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/msep/jobsearch>. This is why one of the first things we do to assist Military Spouses who come to ACS is ensure they've enrolled with a career coach!



Those seeking employment locally will want to check out Oklahoma Job Match through the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission website <https://oesc.ok.gov/>. The website which features an OSEC Virtual Agent to guide you through the process of filing a claim, applying for unemployment, as well as exploring available jobs in all fields and a host of training resources. Want to connect with employers seeking Veterans and Military Family Members? There's a section for that as well.



The Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program at Fort Sill is also an excellent resource for Military Spouse job-seekers. Check out their weekly virtual offerings on their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/FortSillSFLTAP/>



The USO Pathfinder Program on Fort Sill, also serves Military Spouses as well as transitioning service members. You'll find information and announcements from the USO Pathfinder Program on their social media page <https://www.facebook.com/USOOklahoma/>



Transition is nearly a constant with Military Life. Military Spouses, whether transitioning into, through, or out of Military Life are encouraged to enroll in DoD's MySTeP. Created by military spouses, MySTeP is a self-directed, online learning tool that guides military spouses through the available resources, benefits, programs and tools for your entire military journey

<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/8656>

## Exceptional Family Member Program



**EFMP** Family Support

The DoD Exceptional Family Member Program launched an online tool, EFMP & Me, providing 24/7 support to military families with special needs. Through tailored checklists, EFMP & Me users can navigate services, connect with resources and advocate for themselves or a family member with special needs. Visit EFMP & Me <https://efmpandme.militaryonesource.mil>

EFMP Social Connections, Tuesday 20 October at 2:30pm. Exceptional Families are invited to come together for support, resources, great conversations and connections. Call 442-4916 or ask to join the EFMP



group at [www.facebook.com/FortSillACS](https://www.facebook.com/FortSillACS) to register for this event.



## Family Advocacy Program

A health emergency, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, brings many changes and challenges for young children and families. But there are things we can do to face this new normal by staying healthy, keeping routines and providing emotional support for one another while we continue to maintain a sense of optimism. Join Military Family Learning Network on 30 September, 10:00-11:30am CST, to learn about Sesame Street's Caring for Each Other initiative, a suite of resources from Sesame Street to help the whole family find comfort, connect with one another, and remember to take care of themselves. Additionally, we will discuss the materials created to support families before and after disasters. <https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/event/85647/>

We're just a few week's away from October which is Domestic Violence Prevention Month across the nation and the Armed Services. Fort Sill's Family Advocacy Program, and our Lawton area partners, are recognizing these efforts in a BIG WAY with the following events.

- Domestic Violence Prevention Run, Friday, 2 October, 6:30am, Fort Sill Patriot Club, (580) 442-4916
- Thrive Women's Conference Saturday, 10 October, 9:00am, McMahon Auditorium, Lawton
- Painted Up Date Night, Thursday, 15 October, 6:00pm, Bldg. 2839, (580) 442-4916
- You Bet Your ACEs, Thursday, 22 October, 1:30pm, Snow Hall, (580) 442-4916

The New Parent Support Program has gone virtual! Join our Home Visitors for weekly activities geared just for pre-school milkids and their favorite big person including:

- Exploring the Park, resource distro each Monday at 9:30am, virtual group every Tuesday at 9:30am
- Baby Massage group every Wednesday at 11:00am
- Parent Table Talk every Thursday during nap time, 1:30 pm

Military relationships need to be as resilient as the people in them. Look to Military OneSource for proven resources to help you strengthen your bond and navigate common relationship challenges.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support>

Fort Sill's Re-Connect is hosting the Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman, facilitated by CH (MAJ) David and Sarah Chapman for Fort Sill connect military couples interested in developing closer, more supportive relationships. The sessions will be on Wednesdays beginning 30 September and conducted by Zoom from the comfort of your own home! To register contact [Robert.m.plush.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Robert.m.plush.civ@mail.mil) or call (580) 442-1875.

Love Every Day, from Military One Source, is a fun and interactive way that helps you develop and practice good relationship communication in only a few minutes each day. You get personalized text messages for 21 days to help foster a renewed sense of connection. By making intimate communication a consistent part of your daily routine, you and your partner learn to apply the skills in everyday life. In just 21 days, you can reduce disharmony and build healthier habits as a couple. Give Love Every Day a try to spark some fun or rekindle your romance. Learn more at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/interactive-tools-services/resilience-tools/relationship-tool-helps-you-love-every-day>





## Financial Readiness

Have you tried to apply for a loan and received a higher than expected interest rate, or wondered why your score is different at one place than another? Or maybe you want to learn how to boost your credit score without paying exorbitant fees to do so. Your Financial Readiness Team at ACS is offering a free Understanding Your Credit webinar on 25 September, 10:00-1130 am. During this training we will explain what affects your credit score and how it is affected, ways to increase your credit score, and ways to keep your credit worthiness on track. Please register with Tra Cardwell at [pfc1.sill.usa@zeiders.com](mailto:pfc1.sill.usa@zeiders.com) or call (580) 574-2183 to receive the link for the virtual class.

Military Personal Financial Counselors can help Commanders, Service Members, and Family Members on everything from budgeting to investments to consumer protection issues. Fort Sill ACS is lucky enough to have 3 Personal Financial Counselors within our Financial Readiness Program. Learn more by downloading the program guide at <https://finred.usalearning.gov/assets/downloads/FINRED-PFC-G.pdf> or give us a call at 580-442-4916.

Fort Sill's Financial Readiness Team is your one-stop-shop for financial training within your organization. Whether you are looking to inform your organization about TSPs, the Blended Retirement System, vehicle or home-buying, or debt reduction the FRP Team has you covered with 3 Personal Financial Counselors and the ability to tailor a virtual training to your organization's specific needs. See the attached training request form for more information or contact FRP Manager, Ken Lewis, at 442-4916, [kenneth.a.lewis4.civ@mail.mil](mailto:kenneth.a.lewis4.civ@mail.mil) to schedule your unit's training session.

Fort Sill's Re-Connect will be hosting Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace Military Edition beginning on Wednesday evenings beginning on 30 September, 6:30 pm—8:00 pm at Frontier Chapel. The Chapel will be set up to accommodate social distancing and masks will be required. To register contact [Robert.m.plush.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Robert.m.plush.civ@mail.mil) or call (580) 442-1875.

The Financial Readiness Team at ACS will be offering *Budgeting for the Holidays* virtual training on Friday, 30 October at 10:00 am. Please register by calling Tra Cardwell, Personal Financial Counselor, at (580) 670-1932. Take action now to ensure you start CY21 healthy, wealthy, and wise!

## Non-Medical Counseling

Everyone experiences challenges now and again, but if you feel like yours are about to overwhelm you, that's the time to reach out for some assistance! ACS is honored to count the 8 Military Family Life Counselors assigned or attached to Fort Sill among our staff. Each is a licensed professional, able to work independently and anonymously with individuals or couples, and able to conduct presentations on a wide variety of military family life topics within your organizations. MFLCs are great for assisting those trying hard to improve their relationships, manage their stress, adjust to deployment, cope with marital discord, parenting issues, grief or loss. Best of all, they are providing telehealth services so location, childcare, travel time, anonymity, or lack of transportation are no longer barriers to service! Nor is cost a barrier, as this is a



service DoD provides to Military Families who wish to use it. Give us a call today at 580-442-4916 to get connected with one of the Fort Sill MFLCs. Learn more about this DoD funded program at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling>

Our Fort Sill assigned MFLCs are backed up 24/7 by Masters Level Counselors available through the Military One Source Non-Medical Counseling service which can be accessed at any time by calling 1-800-342-9647. So if you are feeling a little down reach out!

Child and Youth Behavioral (CYB) Military Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) are assigned to all of Fort Sill's Child and Youth Services (CYS) Facilities and most of the surrounding area schools that military children attend. If you believe your child would benefit from speaking with a Non-Medical Counselor about self-esteem issues, communication and relationships at home or at school, life skills such as adjustment or problem solving, behavioral issues such as bullying or anger management, or changes at home including deployment, reunion, divorce, or grief, contact Fort Sill's School Liaison Officer, Augelica Fleming at [augelica.a.fleming.naf@mail.mil](mailto:ca.a.fleming.naf@mail.mil).

Relationship Help Made for the MilLife is right at your fingertips! Every relationship could use help from time to time. And military life adds its own unique set of challenges. Whether you're a military couple looking to reinvigorate your bond, rebuild connections or retool your relationship skills whoever your "we" may be, we're here to help and support you. Military OneSource can connect you to free expert guidance, support, tools and resources made with the military in mind, including:

- One-on-one relationship coaching, skill building or counseling.
- Love Every Day, a text-based tool for encouraging communication.
- Virtual resources, such as webinars and other e-learning.
- Relationship articles for every stage of the MilLife.

Join the thousands of people who have found more rewarding, more resilient relationships with information, guidance and expert help through Military OneSource. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/military-relationships-support>

## Relocation Readiness

If you're new to the area and looking for the inside scoop on all that the state has to offer there's no better place to start than the Travel OK website <https://www.travelok.com/> Whether you are looking for shopping, restaurants, fun things to do or places to stay the website, which is divided by region, not only offers insider recommendations you can save yourself a buck or two by checking out the deals and coupons section! Oh, did I mention the downloadable maps and brochures. Or the fact that they've got an app. Check it out!

Plan My Move is the Military One Source "go to" location for all your PCS timelines and checklists. Answer a few simple questions about your Family demographics and the location you'll be moving to, and it will provide you with all the checklists you need to get yourself organized. The site works in concert with Military Installations to populate calendars, an extremely helpful function. Check it out at





<https://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil>

Don't be fooled by private, out of date websites for contact information at your gaining installation. Know before you go with Military Installations. Download your next duty station's welcome packet, including a .pdf guide of all the important facilities, contacts, and hours of operation from the official Defense Installations Management Systems (DIMS). This database is updated quarterly by DoD information and referral specialists around the globe and housed on Military One Source. Find your next "home base" at <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/>

The Fort Sill Lending Closet, full of regular household items available for loan, is now open through a "low-contact" process. If you are scheduled to PCS this summer, whether in-coming or out-going, please contact ACS immediately after you schedule your move with transportation. We'll discuss your family needs, your timeframe to borrow the common household items we have in the lending closet, and then get the sanitized items packaged for a scheduled, curb side pick-up. Call us at 580-442-4916. Please note that all ACS services, including the Lending Closet, are available **by appointment only**. Call ahead to help us help you!

The "Army PCS Move" smartphone application provides updated information on Soldier's and service provider's requirements, entitlements and policies. The Household section provides essential knowledge and tips designed to educate Soldiers, Families, and the Department of the Army Civilians on moving HHG under a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). It's free in your app store.

## Soldier and Family Readiness

The [Military Families Learning Network](#) invites military family service providers and Cooperative Extension professionals to online professional development opportunities where they can exchange experiences, resources, and research to enhance professional impact and professional growth. MFLN will host several upcoming webinars for professionals providing services to Military Families. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are provided for most of MFLN's professional development webinars. Registration links are available on their website. Of particular note this month are:

- Disaster and Hazard Readiness 101, 16 Sept., 10:00-11:30 am CST
- Communication Power Moves: Part II of Working with Difficult Clients, 17 Sept., 10:00-11:00 am CST
- Modeling Healthy Technology Behaviors for Young Children, 24 Sept., 10:00-11:30 am CST
- Let's Work Together: Building Relationships with Families to Support Positive Behavior, 29 Sept., 10:00-11:30 am CST
- Sesame Street and You: Caring for Each Other During COVID-19 and Other Emergencies, 30 Sept., 10:00-11:30 am CST

Sample SFRG SOPs are available on MilSuite. The SOPs were created with guidance from Army Directive 2019-17 (Changes the Family Readiness Group to the Soldier and Family Readiness Group Program); which establishes policy changes to fundraising, reporting, and informal funds activities for the Soldier and Family Readiness Group (SFRG) Program. Visit <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857725> to download the samples. Additionally, Fort Sill's SJA offers a localized SFRG sample for Commanders. Commanders and SFRG Representatives are encouraged to contact their Brigade Legal Officer.



Family Care Plan Checklists and Forms are also available on MilSuite. A Family Care Plan prepares the Soldier and the family in advance for the Soldier's deployment and reassures a deployed Soldier that everything is taken care of at home, minimizing family-related stress and enabling the Soldier to concentrate more fully on his/her mission." Visit <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-857726>

Military families now have FREE access to SitterCity.com, a subscription-based service that provides a national database of more than one million background-checked caregivers nationwide. Candidate-caregivers can also be interviewed through the service, and you can verify their references prior to hire. Please note, participants must pay for any child care services provided, but this is a free subscription (normally \$35 per month) to the SitterCity.com database of providers who have been pre-vetted/background checked. Program-eligible participants can obtain a free access code by logging into your Military OneSource account. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/parenting-and-children/military-childcare-services>



### Survivor Outreach Services

Saturday, 26 September the Oklahoma State SOS Support Coordinators are holding a state-wide virtual game night for Surviving Families in honor of Gold Star Mothers and Families Day which is remembered nationally the following day. Gold Star Families wishing to attend can contact [Keith Powers](#) at 580-442-4916 for information or to RSVP.

Thank you so much for your help in sharing the resources contained within this ACS Update with those who may benefit from it. I truly believe that Personal and Family Readiness are foundational to Resilience. Please take a minute to tell us how we're doing and what else we might assist you with by filling out an [ICE comment card](#). That's it for this week.

Optimism is a Force Multiplier! #AskACS  
Lisa Jansen-Rees, MSW, ACSW  
Director, Army Community Service